

# Hawkwatching at Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve

## September 20, 2014

**What:** Fall Raptor Migration – Broad-winged Hawks will be the most commonly observed raptor, passing through early in the season. Other species that likely move through in modest numbers include Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, and American Kestrels.

**Where:** The summit area of Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve. Widely recognized as one of Virginia's greatest natural heritage treasures, Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve is like no other place in the state. A variety of unusual conditions combine to make the preserve home to 13 plant species, three invertebrate species and six natural communities that are rare in Virginia. The preserve is located in the southern corner of Floyd County.

**From Floyd,** travel southwest on U.S. Route 221 about 6 miles to Route 727. Turn left (south) on 727 and go about 6 miles to a low saddle in the ridge near the eastern slope of Buffalo Mountain. Turn right on the gravel access road. Go about 1 mile to the gravel parking area.

**From the Blue Ridge Parkway,** take Route 799 north about 1½ miles to Route 604. Turn left and go about 1½ miles to Route 727. Turn left and go about 1 mile to a low saddle in the ridge near the eastern slope of Buffalo Mountain. Turn right on the gravel access road. Go about 1 mile to the gravel parking area.

**When:** Although different species of migrating birds-of-prey will likely be passing along this point throughout the fall, the largest concentrations will be Broad-winged Hawk flights that will occur in mid- to late September. Each species has its own window during the fall migration, and therefore not all species are likely to be seen at the same times.

**Program Itinerary:** Natural Heritage Program staff would like to invite interested members of the public to join us at the summit area of Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve to observe migrating raptors. Weather-permitting, we will be present from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM to offer assistance in sighting and identification of migrating raptors on September 20, 2014. Participants might want to bring binoculars as some birds may pass over at significant heights above the summit. Other items to consider bringing are sun-screen, eye-drops, a lawn chair or cushion, water, and a bird field guide. Other considerations include wearing a pair of comfortable footwear suitable for traversing uneven terrain, and bringing a variety of clothing as weather conditions are subject to change during this time of year.